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SOLDIERS' TRACT ASSOCIATION, Richmond, Va. No. 91.

7/7/32

The Wounded; or, A Time to Think.

YOU have been brought very near to death; you have been to the very brink of the eternal world: you have seen death all around you. Many whom you have known have been laid low, but you have been spared. And now what is your duty as you are obliged to lie quietly on your bed? When you were in the field, it was your duty to advance steadily, and to fight boldly; but now, although you can do nothing for the service of your country, still you need not be quite idle. That was a time to fight, *this is a time to think.*

It is a time to think of *God's mercy in delivering you.* If you believe that there is a God in heaven, who rules over all things, you cannot think that it was by chance that the ball which struck you, or the sword or lance which wounded you, did not enter some vital part, and cause your death. Such was the case with many. Think to yourself, "Why was it not the case with me?" It was because the Lord had mercy upon you, and protected you. You may say to God with David, "Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle," Psa. cxl 7; and the Lord says, "See now that I, even I, am he; and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." Deut. xxxii. 39. The Lord Jesus Christ also tells us that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father, and that the very hairs of our heads are numbered. Matt. x. 29, 30. Therefore you may depend upon it, that every ball or weapon struck only where God permitted it. Do not speak of your escape as "good luck," but lift your heart in gratitude to Him whose protecting providence prevented your wound from being mortal. In mercy to your immortal soul he has spared you, and given you time to think.

This is a time to think *of the past.* Recall to yourself your past life, ever since you can recollect. Perhaps you may remember your mother teaching you to pray, or to repeat hymns to her, or some texts of Scripture, learned from her or at school. Perhaps you may recollect, as a child, feeling afraid of offending the great God, and wishing to go to heaven when you should die. What have become of these thoughts since?

This is a time to call to mind *the mercies* you have received, and *the sins* you have committed. Many sins committed years ago, you may have tried to put from your mind, and may almost have succeeded in forgetting; but they are as fresh in the mind of God as the first moment that they were done; and unless they are forgiven, they will appear against you at the day of judgment. Reflect on what the Bible says of sin. We are there told that "sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John iii. 4. By this, you see that sin is not only an act which may injure your fellow-creatures, but anything which is contrary to God's holy law; and this law takes notice not only of outward actions, but also of the inward thoughts and feelings of the heart. When you take this view of sin, how awful and solemn is another declaration of God's word, "The wages of sin is death." Rom. vi. 23.

Do you not feel in looking back on your past life, that you cannot stand before God's holy law, and that you have been living forgetful of him? His word declares that "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Psalm ix. 17. It teaches us that man is born in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5. And our Lord Jesus Christ declares, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3; that is, except a man receive a new heart. Thus is this great change set forth: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. v. 17.

Reflect on these words, and then ask yourself what would have become of your soul had you been amongst

the slain. If your conscience tells you that you are not born again, then it would have been impossible for you to "enter into the kingdom of God," and you would at this moment have been suffering God's just displeasure. Great has been the mercy of God in sparing you and giving you time to think. Will you not now resolve to make a good use of this time?

This is a time to think *of the future.* For what purpose have I been delivered? seems a natural and reasonable question for a man to ask, when he has passed through such scenes of death as you have witnessed. You have been delivered in order that you may now seek the salvation of your soul; and this salvation is freely provided for you.

Attend to the gracious declarations of God's word: "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel xxxiii. 11. If you have looked honestly into your own heart, and at your past life, you must feel that you deserve nothing but condemnation; but God offers you free pardon and eternal life, through his Son, Jesus Christ. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Timothy i. 15. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16; and Christ declares, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John vi. 37. Will you not hearken, and come to the Saviour with the prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner?"

You will find that that prayer is never uttered in vain. You are now laid aside from fighting for your country, but you have a battle to fight in your own heart against sin, and against the devil. The enemies you have met in battle could only kill the body; but sin and Satan can destroy both soul and body in hell. You cannot fight against these enemies in your strength, but God has promised to give the Holy Spirit to all who ask him. Pray

for the Holy Spirit, and determine now by his help to avoid the temptations and the evil company which used to lead you into sin. The Lord Jesus Christ, who died upon the cross for you, is called in the Bible "the Captain of our salvation." Will you not now enlist under his banner, and become henceforth "a good soldier of Jesus Christ?"

Think of the future *beyond this life;* you have been preserved from death now, but who can tell for how long? The next time you are in the face of the enemy, you may receive your death wound; or you may sink under disease; but if you now indeed become a soldier of Jesus Christ, he will give you certain victory over the enemies of your soul, and you will be welcomed as a glorious conqueror into the presence of the King of kings. The apostle Paul said, shortly before he was going to die, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; and Jesus Christ declares, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out;" and "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. iii. 12–21. Think of these promises, and pray: "O Lord, grant me thy Holy Spirit, and make me now a soldier of Jesus Christ, and hereafter a partaker of his eternal victory, for his name's sake."

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